

FACT SHEET

PETITION FOR DESIGNATION AS SOLE SOURCE AQUIFER ESPANOLA BASIN AQUIFER SYSTEM SANTA FE AREA, NEW MEXICO July 2006

Background

- The Sole Source Aquifer (SSA) program was established under Section 1424(e) of the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974. It allows EPA to formally designate an aquifer as the sole or principal source of drinking water for an area.
- The effect of designation would be to allow EPA to review projects with Federal financial assistance (Federal loans, loan guarantees, grants, etc) that might contaminate the aquifer. Upon finding that a project might contaminate the aquifer EPA could prevent Federal financial assistance if the project were not properly modified.
- Under the SSA program EPA reviews projects only on the basis of water quality impacts. Water quantity and water distribution issues are not considered under the program except as they relate to water quality in the aquifer.

General

- The petition was prepared by La Cienega Valley Citizens for Environmental Safeguards and submitted by Elaine Cimino, Director. The petition was received by EPA on May 25, 2006.
- Notice of receipt of the petition and announcement of a public comment period will be published in the Santa Fe, New Mexican on July 27, 2006. The public hearing and a town meeting are tentatively scheduled for August 15, 2006 in the city of Santa Fe.

Specific

- The area requested for designation covers approximately 3,000 square miles, and includes the cities of Santa Fe, Los Alamos, and Espanola. The area also includes the Pueblos of San Juan, Santa Clara, Pojoaque, San Ildefonso, Nambe, Tesque, Picuris, and Cochiti (see accompanying map).
- The petition estimates the total population to be 223,624 for the requested designation area.
- The petition states that over one-half of the drinking water in the area is supplied by the aquifer.
- The petition also states that there are no feasible alternative sources which could provide over half of the drinking water for the area.

Additional Information can be found at <http://epa.gov/region6/6wq/swp/ssa/index.htm>